

Remarks

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the present U.S. Patent application as amended herein. Claims 1, 3-5, 8, 9, 13, 14, 17, 22, 24-26 and 28 have been amended. Claim 1 has been canceled herein. Claim 2 has previously been canceled. Thus, claims 1 and 3-45 are pending.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 1, 4, 14, 17, 22 and 28-45 were rejected as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,848,413 issued to Wolff, et al. (*Wolff*) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,978,477 issued to Hull, et al. (*Hull*) and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,584,508 issued to Epstein, et al. (*Epstein*) and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,742,116 issued to Matsui (*Matsui*).

Claims 8-13, 15, 16, 18, 23 and 27 were rejected as being unpatentable over *Wolff* in view of *Hull* and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,188,673 issued to Bauer, et al. (*Bauer*). The present application (09/398,229) and U.S. Patent No. 5,978,477 (*Hull*) were, at the time the invention of the present application was made, owned by, or subject to an obligation of assignment to, Ricoh Company Limited. Accordingly, *Hull* cannot be used to support a rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) of the claims of the present application. Therefore, Applicants request that the rejection of claims 8-13, 15, 16, 18, 23 and 27 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) be withdrawn.

Claims 5-7, 19-21 and 24-26 were rejected as being unpatentable over *Wolff* in view of *Hull* and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,317,777 issued to Skarbo, et al.

Application No. 09/398,229
Amendment dated May 9, 2006
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Examiner Flynn, Kimberly D.
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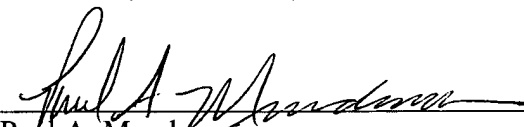
(*Skarbo*). The present application (09/398,229) and U.S. Patent No. 5,978,477 (*Hull*) were, at the time the invention of the present application was made, owned by, or subject to an obligation of assignment to, Ricoh Company Limited. Accordingly, *Hull* cannot be used to support a rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) of the claims of the present application. Therefore, Applicants request that the rejection of claims 5-7, 19-21 and 24-26 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) be withdrawn.

Conclusion

For at least the foregoing reasons, Applicants submit that the rejections have been overcome. Therefore, claims 1 and 3-45 are in condition for allowance and such action is earnestly solicited. The Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned by telephone if such contact would further the examination of the present application. Please charge any shortages and credit any overcharges to our Deposit Account number 02-2666.

Respectfully submitted,
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